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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

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*Thomas Warton, A Biographical and Critical Study.* By CLARISSA RINAKER. University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, Vol. II, No. 1, February, 1916. Pp. 241.

Miss Rinaker's dissertation, *Thomas Warton, A Biographical and Critical Study*, is clearly the product of long and painstaking research, and as such deserves all the praise that industry must ever command. Important new and unpublished manuscript materials as well as a large mass of printed documents are for the first time brought to bear on the great critic's life and work, and the volume closes with a list of more than seven hundred books used by Warton in the preparation of the *History of English Poetry*.

The purpose of Miss Rinaker's study as announced by the author is to determine the intrinsic and historical importance of Thomas Warton. She professes to discuss "the relation of all his work—his poetry, his criticism, his history of English poetry, his various antiquarian works—to the literary movements of his day." By these words, as well as by the extremely inclusive title adopted for the volume, Miss Rinaker commits herself to the task of estimating the intellectual equipment of one of the greatest browsers in an age of great browsers and of determining the significance of one of the most significant writers in the whole range of English literary history. That this task, requiring, as it does, not only tremendous research but also unusual analytical power and constructive imagination, has not been accomplished successfully within the limits of an ordinary doctoral dissertation, is hardly to be wondered at.

In numerous instances the reasoning is illogical, the language self-contradictory, or the idiom un-English. For example, we read that although the task of reconciling modern romantic literature with classical standards was "impossible," the critics of the rationalistic school "did not hesitate to accomplish it" (p. 38); and that Warton had "more than the eighteenth-century antiquary's boundless curiosity" (p. 87). In spite of the fact that Warton is admitted to be "without much creative poetical genius" (p. 23), his work is declared to be "distinguished in every field." See also the conflicting statements as to Warton's influence on Scott (p. 119 and note; pp. 142 f.), the attitude of the eighteenth century toward Chaucer (p. 39, l. 9; p. 88, l. 8), and the character of the early eighteenth-century imitations of Spenser (p. 39, ll. 25 ff.; p. 41, l. 5). See further page 33, lines 29 and 32; page 52, line 18; and page 73, line 2.

As John Dennis observes (*Studies in Eng. Lit.* [1876], p. 194),<sup>1</sup> reliable biographical material on Thomas Warton is exceedingly scanty; but Miss Rinaker introduces into her account of Warton's life far more doubt than even the meager data at our disposal necessitate. Her excessive use of "probably," "perhaps," and periphrases of similar meaning betray the timidity of the unseasoned investigator who sees difficulties where none really exist, or who, determined to make out a case of some sort at any expense, violates the important principle of historical research that, in the absence of reliable evidence, agnosticism is infinitely preferable to guesswork. For instance, Miss Rinaker says that "especially during his first years at Oxford Warton probably did not devote himself exclusively to scholarly pursuits, but tasted the robust pleasures and petty trials of the lighter side of Oxford life" (p. 20).<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to see why Miss Rinaker was led to qualify her assertion by "probably," especially in the face of the poems which she accepts as evidence. Compare the picture of the student given in the lines quoted (p. 21) from the "Panegyric on Oxford Ale" with the remainder of the poem, which shows him reposing his "gladsome limbs" at a pot-house, where he passes the hours "while in repeated round Returns replenish'd the successive cup." That the "Ode to a Grizzle Wig" contains much autobiography few would deny, but the facts appear somewhat distorted when it is discovered that Miss Rinaker's words, "contributing his share to an afternoon's pleasure at Wolvercote," are derived from Warton's line, "whole afternoons at Wolvercote I quaff'd" (Mant, *Works*, II, 205). Such passages arouse the suspicion that Miss Rinaker feels called upon to whitewash the character of her author—a precaution hardly necessary from the standpoint of either eighteenth-century morals or general literary history. Later (p. 136) she remarks that "one is seldom justified in interpreting poetry autobiographically," and cautiously suggests that the obviously autobiographical sonnet "To the River Lodon" contains a "personal note."

Warton's relation to certain of his contemporaries appears to deserve more attention than Miss Rinaker bestows upon the matter.

In treating the important subject of the elder Thomas Warton's influence upon his more gifted son, the author might have made out a much stronger case had she assembled and properly weighed all the evidence. If we judge by her language, most of her conclusions are open to question; in two pages of observations on the relations between father and son "no doubt," "probably," "perhaps," and similar expressions occur at least a dozen times. The assumption that by 1748 (the year in which the elder Warton's poems appeared) the son, then twenty years of age, "had already come into [his] real poetical patrimony" is hardly justified by the facts,

<sup>1</sup> Dennis' criticism of Warton is apparently unknown to Miss Rinaker.

<sup>2</sup> Earlier (p. 13) she observes that "Warton's boyhood days seem not to have been entirely filled . . . with study."

and evidence could easily be adduced to show how profoundly the bent of the younger writer's mind was affected by the literary and antiquarian tastes of his father. Miss Rinaker refers (p. 12) to Thomas Warton as singularly attached to his brother Joseph, and she points out certain instances of contact between the two throughout life, but she pays insufficient attention to the valuable and easily accessible evidence of sympathetic relations between the brothers as bearing on the literary output of the younger. The obvious imitation of Joseph's "Enthusiast" (1740) in Thomas' "Pleasures of Melancholy" (1745) is but one of the clear indications of an early and close connection between the authors—indications which might have led Miss Rinaker to suspect that the publication of the *Observations on the Faerie Queene* and the *Essay on Pope* (Vol. I) only two years apart was not accidental and that the real explanation of Thomas' temporary abandonment of poetry is to be sought not so much in his sensitiveness and his inability "to weather the storms of unfavorable criticism" (Rinaker, p. 35) as in his desire to give expression to theories crystallized by the exchange of ideas with his brother (contrast Miss Rinaker's statement, p. 57, ll. 7 ff.). There is little reason to believe that Thomas Warton during his early career took his mission as a poet more seriously than other university men of his age who entertained the common-rooms of Oxford and Cambridge with their effusions.<sup>1</sup> Additional light might have been thrown on Warton's critical and poetical equipment had his connection with other writers of the mid-eighteenth century been more fully treated. For example, in his "Mons Catharinæ" (1760) Warton imitates Gray's "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College" (1747), but Miss Rinaker does not mention the similarity between the Latin and the English poem; nor does she note Warton's blunder in attributing to Gray a translation of "The Awakening of Angantyr" (cf. Kittredge, Introduction to Phelps's *Selections from Gray* [Boston, 1894], p. xlix) or Gray's tribute to Warton in the advertisement to the 1768 edition of the former's poems. See further Mant, *op. cit.*, I, 28; II, 174, n.

In connection with the *Observations on the Faerie Queene* Miss Rinaker makes much of Warton's "special preparation" for the task before him and of his "extensive knowledge of the neglected periods of early English literature" (p. 44; cf. p. 61); but she gives no adequate account of this "special preparation" and this "extensive knowledge." One expects at least a selected bibliography illustrative of Warton's *Belesenheit* in 1754, such as that furnished in connection with the *History of English Poetry*, but none such is forthcoming. Some of the books given as sources of the *History* were known to Warton at the time he wrote the *Observations*—a noteworthy fact in the history of his literary growth. For instance, *Don Quixote*,

<sup>1</sup> The "Epistle from Thomas Hearne," which Miss Rinaker attributes to Joseph on the strength of the latter's reference to it as "my verses," was assigned to the proper author as early as 1810 in Chalmers' *Eng. Poets*, XVIII, 170, but Miss Rinaker does not refer to Chalmers in this connection.

which Miss Rinaker includes in her list of sources of the *History*, was used in writing the *Observations* and had been known to Warton as early as 1751 (cf. "Newmarket, A Satire").<sup>1</sup> Hickes's deservedly famous *Thesaurus*, one of the most widely read and respected scholarly works accessible to the pioneers of English romanticism, is represented in Miss Rinaker's list of sources of the *History* by Wotton's *Conspectus Brevis* (1708), but the original was used by Warton in his *Observations* and is there cited (ed. 1807, p. 89, note) along with the work of the seventeenth-century Swedish antiquary, Olaus Verelius. Among other works which are listed by Miss Rinaker as sources of the *History* and which were known to Warton in 1754, special attention should be called to Drayton's *Polyolbion*, a poem whose influence on Warton Miss Rinaker apparently makes little effort to estimate.

Although Miss Rinaker is safe enough in calling the *Observations* "the first important piece of modern historical criticism in the field of English literature" (p. 38), it is quite misleading to imply, as the author frequently does, that Warton was the first English critic to use the historical method—that he, to use Miss Rinaker's phraseology, "produced the historical method" (Preface). Even the hasty survey to be found in G. M. Miller's *Historical Point of View in English Criticism from 1570 to 1770* (*Angl. Forschn.*, Heft 35 [1913]), contains abundant evidence that Warton was by no means the first to apply the historical method to English literary criticism. Miller's conclusions, though detracting in nothing from Warton's importance as a critic, deprive him of the factitious merit of absolute originality claimed for him by Miss Rinaker, and, had they been known to her, would have prevented many unguarded statements. In fact, Miss Rinaker's whole tendency is to overemphasize the value of romantic at the expense of classical standards. Instead of adopting the impartial attitude of the best modern critics, she too obviously holds a brief for Warton's type of criticism as opposed to that of his predecessors.

It is surprising that Miss Rinaker regards it as "impossible to give an adequate idea of the variety of books" used by Warton in writing the *History of English Poetry* (p. 121), especially in view of the labor she has expended in identifying the editions consulted. The task is indeed difficult, but it is one which the critical biographer must not shirk. What is needed is an account of the use which Warton made of at least his chief authorities—the facts, theories, and documents which he regarded as worthy of elucidation or preservation, and his method of dealing with them.

Moreover, the principle by which Miss Rinaker is guided in the selection of books for her list is unfortunate, since it involves the omission of certain works which are important as sources of literary if not of historical information. The exclusion of Hickes's *Thesaurus* has already been referred to.

<sup>1</sup> Sixteen hundred and eight, given as the date of Jarvis' translation of *Don Quixote* (p. 188), is obviously a misprint. The earliest edition containing Warburton's essay was the second, in 1749. See further Rius, *Bibliografía crítica de las obras de . . . Cervantes* (Madrid, 1895), I, 262.

Oddly enough, Miss Rinaker appears to think that the *Thesaurus* is a glossary (p. 121).

A more careful examination of Warton's reading would have thrown much light on the sources from which the poet derived the "truth severe" which he later dressed "by fairy fiction." In spite of frequent emphasis on Warton's interest in the past as the keynote of his work, Miss Rinaker treats inadequately his attitude toward one of the most important sources of romantic and antiquarian enthusiasm in the eighteenth century—Northern Antiquities. Warton's references to Scandinavian literature and the services of the *History of English Poetry* in popularizing the traditions of the North are discussed by Farley, *Scandinavian Influences in the English Romantic Movement* (Boston, 1903), pp. 90 f. (See further p. 77, n. 1; p. 86; cf. Drake, *Essays*, II [1810], 219.) Miss Rinaker does not refer to Farley's book nor to Kittredge's note (Phelps's *Selections from Gray*, p. xlix). Attention may be drawn to the "Dying Ode of Ragnar Lodbrog," since Miss Rinaker mentions the poem without grasping its significance. The author notes that the elder Warton versified two scraps of the song from the Latin quoted by Sir William Temple, but she fails to observe that both sons speak with enthusiasm of the Latin version (*Essay on Pope* [5th ed., 1806], I, 357 f.; *Hist. of Eng. Poet.*, ed. Hazlitt, I, 117, nn.), and that the younger probably had it in mind when, in his ode "On His Majesty's Birthday" for 1788, he wrote the lines about "the sons of Saxon Elva . . . Who died, to drain the warrior-bowl" (Mant, *op. cit.*, II, 125 f.). The poem had a distinguished literary career during the eighteenth century. The passage on the druid in the "Pleasures of Melancholy" (1745) is pointed out by Miss Rinaker as an evidence of Warton's "interest in native mythology," but she says nothing of Warton's share in propagating the eighteenth-century druidic myth, nor is the imitation ballad of "Hardy-knute" (which had appeared as recently as 1724 in Ramsay's *Evergreen*, II, 247 ff.) mentioned in connection with the obvious reference to that poem in the "Ode on the Approach of Summer."

In spite of the tremendous importance of the Ossianic question in literary circles from 1760 on, Miss Rinaker says nothing of Warton's attitude toward the authenticity of Macpherson's work and the general subject of the Celtic past. She ignores even such obvious sources of information as the dissertation on the "Origin of Romantic Fiction in Europe." Warton's labors as an antiquarian can be seen in their true perspective only in connection with investigations in this field during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, but Miss Rinaker gives no adequate account of such studies as a background for Warton's work. Valuable indications of Warton's interests found in certain of his minor prose works appear to have largely escaped Miss Rinaker. His *Life and Literary Remains of Ralph Bathurst* (1761) is referred to merely as "a labor of love" (p. 71); nothing

is said of the evidence it furnishes of Warton's acquaintance with Sprat's well-known *History of the Royal Society* and other seventeenth-century antiquarian and historical disquisitions. Attention might at least be called to Warton's enthusiasm over contemporary interest in the past (*Life of Bathurst*, p. 150), to his praise of Bathurst for vindicating "antiquarian learning" (*op. cit.*, pp. 53 f.), and to the note in which he transcribes from one of the Aubrey manuscripts the famous traditions about Spenser's fellowship at Pembroke, Milton's whipping, and Shakespeare's being a butcher's son (*op. cit.*, pp. 153 f.).

To the influence of the Latin and Greek classics on Warton's English work Miss Rinaker gives scant attention (p. 138), and she disregards his considerable body of Latin verse, although it contains a number of passages illustrative of his fondness for the past.<sup>1</sup>

TOM PEETE CROSS

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

*Studies in the Syntax of the Lindisfarne Gospels.* With Appendices on Some Idioms in the Germanic Languages. By MORGAN CALLAWAY, JR. Hesperia, Supplementary Series No. 5. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1918. Pp. xvi+240.

The title chosen by Professor Callaway indicates a broader field than that actually covered; the present work is merely the first instalment of proposed studies in the syntax of the Lindisfarne Gospels and is concerned only with the participle and the infinitive. The next instalment is to be devoted to the subjunctive mood. The present work is accordingly an extension into the Northumbrian dialect of Professor Callaway's syntactic researches upon the participle and the infinitive in West Saxon (*The Absolute Participle in Anglo-Saxon*, 1889; *The Appositive Participle in Anglo-Saxon*, 1901; and *The Infinitive in Anglo-Saxon*, 1913) and is really supplementary to them. The principle object is to compare the syntax of these forms in Northumbrian with that of the same verbals in West Saxon, and both method of approach and classification and arrangement of material are similar to those of the earlier studies. Like the earlier studies, the present one is an extremely careful and detailed analysis: every form is recorded, the Latin correspondents are given whenever they are at all significant, forms unclassified by other investigators are assigned, every doubtful or unusual construction is annotated, and no difficulty is evaded. The consideration of each usage is followed by an explanation of the origin of the construction as native or foreign, not only in Northumbrian and Old English,

<sup>1</sup> Miss Rinaker's bibliography of Warton's works omits a new edition of *The Oxford Sausage* which appeared in 1777.